

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Long Haul Folding Kayaks Inc

Colorado Association for Manufacturing and Technology

Long Haul Folding Kayaks Secures New Contracts

Client Profile:

Long Haul Folding Kayaks, Inc. manufactures accessories for recreational kayakers and repairs commercial grade German-made folding kayaks for the U.S. Army. The 19-year-old company employs three people at its facility in Cedaredge, Colorado.

Situation:

In 2001, Long Haul Folding Kayaks began manufacturing its own kayaks to rival the German kayaks, producing approximately 50 hand-made kayaks a year. In 2004, the company secured a contract with the U.S. Army to manufacture 150 folding kayaks. Mark knew that to fulfill the contract he needed help and was referred to Monty Rutherford of the Colorado Association for Manufacturing and Technology (CAMT), a NIST MEP network affiliate, by the Grand Junction Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Solution:

CAMT provided training in the principles of Lean manufacturing, analyzed and implemented changes to the facility lay-out, and assisted in the identification of proper manufacturing equipment to cut manufacturing lead times. The facility lay-out was rearranged to better complement the flow of work, and three large pieces of manufacturing equipment were added to the shop floor: a conveyor system, a punching press, and a sanding jig. Previously, every task was completed manually: material was cut with scissors, sanded by hand and carried from station to station.

Long Haul Folding Kayaks was able to increase its production by over 300 percent and now has the capacity to fulfill large contracts. Since the initial U.S. Army contract, Long Haul has procured contracts from both the U.S. Navy and Marines, and is now in negotiations with foreign militaries. These changes also afforded the company the time to develop a new product line: sewn medical bags for the medical and emergency response industries.

Results:

- * Increased production by over 300 percent.
- * Retained \$680,000 in sales.
- * Saved \$8,000 in labor costs.
- * Developed new product.
- * Secured additional contracts with military.

Testimonial:

"CAMT can help people like me, a small business owner in rural America with entrepreneurial drive, but without all the business and manufacturing background, tackle obstacles to success."

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Mark Eckhart, Owner